RESOLUTION DIRECTING PURSUIT OF
COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY AND STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVES

Recommended for Approval by the Executive and Audit Committee
and Finance and Administration Committee
December 2, 2015

Amended and Approved by the Board
December 10, 2015

BACKGROUND

A. Portland State University leads the way to an equitable and sustainable future through academic excellence, urban engagement, and expanding opportunity for all. We serve as an “anchor institution” for the Portland area, providing thousands of jobs, investing millions of dollars in capital projects and adding an estimated $1.44 billion in annual economic impact. However, higher education is in a state of significant change and college affordability remains a major obstacle for prospective and current students.

B. In 1990 voters approved Measure 5, which limited property taxes. The measure, among other state priorities, has led to significant disinvestment in higher education. Oregon is now 47th in the nation in state per student spending. PSU currently receives 25 percent of its operating budget from the state and relies primarily on tuition revenue. This results in students paying more of the total cost of education and in annual increases in tuition.

C. PSU has 28,076 students enrolled this fall and 28 percent of them are students of color. Seventy percent of our undergraduates receive financial aid with many of them qualifying for federal Pell Grants because of their low incomes. Even with current institutional scholarships, grants, and loans the total unmet need for all our undergraduates who qualify for financial aid this year is $151 million.

D. To meet the state’s goal of 40 percent with a bachelor’s degree or higher, we must secure more funding for scholarships, tutors, advisors, more faculty, and other forms of student support. Without adequate funding we will not be able to ensure that more Oregonians graduate with a quality education, on time, and with less student debt. As Oregon’s only urban research and teaching university, Portland State is well positioned to address the opportunities and challenges this presents while continuing to “Let Knowledge Serve” our city, the state, and the region.

RESOLUTION

Now, therefore, be it Resolved by the Board of Trustees, in recognition of the urgent need to secure more stable funding to support the students and mission of Portland State University, that the President of the University pursue a variety of initiatives to address college affordability and to improve student success through enhanced financial support of the University. Such initiatives should include:

1. Continued efforts to increase the Legislature’s investment in higher education after decades of state disinvestment.
2. Continued efforts to assure full implementation of a Higher Education Coordinating Commission funding formula that provides the University with a proportion of state funds that is equitable and that appropriately recognizes the University’s student population, diversity, degree outcomes, and contributions to the achievement of statewide goals.

3. The launch by the Portland State University Foundation of a comprehensive philanthropic campaign.

4. The recruitment of more out-of-state and international students, without decreasing the opportunities provided to Oregonians.

5. The launch of new projects as part of the reTHINK PSU initiative, an ongoing campus-wide effort to deliver an education that serves more students with better outcomes, while containing costs through curricular innovation, community engagement and effective use of technology.

6. The full exploration and, if feasible, pursuit of a new Portland metropolitan area revenue measure to provide support to the University, such as a payroll tax paid by businesses in the metropolitan area, to fund scholarships for local students, to enhance student support, and to continue to generate greater numbers of high quality graduates that support the economic development and cultural vitality of this region. Prior to making any recommendation that a petition for a ballot measure be filed, the President is to consult with members of this Board and other key stakeholders.

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
DECEMBER 10, 2015

[Signature]

Secretary to the Board